CLAIMS

1. A method for raster image processing (RIP), using an RIP printer software application installed on a networked computer, said RIP application adaptable to coordinate with a plurality of other component printer software applications associated with one or more printers, and said RIP application having at least one filter, comprising the steps of:

selecting said RIP application to print a job;

sending said job to said RIP application;

said filter parsing said job into one or more print pieces; and

forwarding said print pieces to said one or more designated printers.

2. The method of Claim 1, further comprising an engine if said networked computer is a proprietary server.

3. The method of Claim 1, wherein said other component printer applications comprise an optimum print job balancing component.

4. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of determining, interpreting, and implementing job PPD settings.

5. The method of Claim 1, wherein said RIP application works with a plurality of proprietary utilities.

6. The method of Claim 5, wherein said plurality of proprietary utilities comprises, but is not limited to:

a driver utility for a user to interact with said RIP application; and

a reporting utility for reporting job status and designated printer locations for said printer pieces.

7. The method of Claim 6, wherein said driver utility lists some or all of PPD options associated with said other component printer applications.

8. The method of Claim 7, wherein said PPD options apply on a per-job basis.

9. The method of Claim 3, by said optimum print job balancing component, further comprising any or all of, but not limited, to the steps of:

routing said job to a most available printer based on color use, pages per minute, number of pages per said job, size, and number of copies for jobs already in a queue and number of copies of said job;

automatically splitting said job copies across a specified number of printers meeting specific criteria;

automatically splitting a single long job across more than one of said printers;

supporting mixed groups of said printers, wherein each of said groups represents a different make or model;

monitoring print job status and redirecting said job if an error occurs;

supporting job scheduling, allowing said user to specify said job priority, a rush job, and rip and print scheduling in advance; and

supporting specified non-proprietary black and white printers.

10. The method of Claim 9, wherein said rush job requires a user password.

11. The method of Claim 9, wherein said advance scheduling is up to one week.

12. A system for raster image processing (RIP), using an RIP printer software application installed on a networked computer, said RIP application adaptable to coordinate with a plurality of other component printer software applications associated with one or more printers, and said RIP application having at least one filter, comprising,

means for selecting said RIP application to print a job;

means for sending said job to said RIP application;

means for said filter parsing said job into one or more print pieces; and

means for forwarding said print pieces to said one or more designated printers.

13. The system of Claim 12, further comprising an engine if said networked computer is a proprietary server.

14. The system of Claim 12, wherein said other component printer applications comprise an optimum print job balancing component.

15. The system of Claim 12, further comprising means for determining, interpreting, and implementing job PPD settings.

16. The system of Claim 12, wherein said RIP application works with a plurality of proprietary utilities.

17. The system of Claim 16, wherein said plurality of proprietary utilities comprises, but is not limited to:

a driver utility for a user to interact with said RIP application; and

a reporting utility for reporting job status and designated printer locations for said printer pieces.

18. The system of Claim 17, wherein said driver utility lists some or all of PPD options associated with said other component printer applications.

19. The system of Claim 18, wherein said PPD options apply on a per-job basis.

20. The system of Claim 14, by said optimum print job balancing component, further comprising any or all of, but is not limited to:

means for routing said job to a most available printer based on color use, pages per minute, number of pages per said job, size, and number of copies for jobs already in a queue and number of copies of said job;

means for automatically splitting said job copies across a specified number of printers meeting specific criteria;

means for automatically splitting a single long job across more than one of said printers;

means for supporting mixed groups of said printers, wherein each of said groups represents a different make or model;

means for monitoring print job status and redirecting said job if an error occurs;

means for supporting job scheduling, allowing said user to specify said job priority, a rush job, and rip and print scheduling in advance; and

means for supporting specified non-proprietary black and white printers.

21. The system of Claim 20, wherein said rush job requires a user password.

22. The system of Claim 20, wherein said advance scheduling is up to one week.

23. A method for raster image processing (RIP), using an RIP printer software application installed on a networked computer, said RIP software having PPD options, said

RIP application adaptable to coordinate with a plurality of other component printer software applications associated with one or more printers, and said RIP application having at least one filter, comprising the steps of:

a user setting appropriate PPD options for a job using a driver utility, said utility interacting with said RIP software;

said user selecting to use said RIP printer application;

sending said print job to said RIP printer application;

said RIP application making print load balancing decisions;

said RIP application sending said print job to said appropriate one or more printers;

said user determining said appropriate one or more printers by using a second utility; and

redirecting said job to one or more other printers according to error protocol procedures if an error occurs, wherein said redirection is reflected in said second utility.

24. A system for raster image processing (RIP), using an RIP printer software application installed on a networked computer, said RIP software having PPD options, said RIP application adaptable to coordinate with a plurality of other component printer software applications associated with one or more printers, and said RIP application having at least one filter, comprising:

means for a user setting appropriate PPD options for a job using a driver utility, said utility interacting with said RIP software;

means for said user selecting to use said RIP printer application;

means for sending said print job to said RIP printer application;

means for said RIP application making print load balancing decisions;

means for said RIP application sending said print job to said appropriate one or more printers;

means for said user determining said appropriate one or more printers by using a second utility; and

means for redirecting said job to one or more other printers according to error protocol procedures if an error occurs, wherein said redirection is reflected in said second utility.

25. A method for optimum print job balancing a user's print job from a networked computer, comprising any or all of, but not limited to, the steps of:

routing a job to a most available printer based on color use, pages per minute, number of pages per said job, size, and number of copies for jobs already in a queue and number of copies of said job;

automatically splitting said job copies across a specified number of printers meeting specific criteria;

automatically splitting a single long job across more than one of said printers;

supporting mixed groups of said printers, wherein each of said groups represents a different make or model;

monitoring print job status and redirecting said job if an error occurs;

supporting job scheduling, allowing said user to specify said job priority, a rush job, and rip and print scheduling in advance; and

supporting specified non-proprietary black and white printers.

26. A system for optimum print job balancing a user's print job from a networked computer, comprising any or all of, but not limited to:

means for routing a job to a most available printer based on color use, pages per minute, number of pages per said job, size, and number of copies for jobs already in a queue and number of copies of said job;

means for automatically splitting said job copies across a specified number of printers meeting specific criteria;

means for automatically splitting a single long job across more than one of said printers;

means for supporting mixed groups of said printers, wherein each of said groups represents a different make or model;

means for monitoring print job status and redirecting said job if an error occurs;

means for supporting job scheduling, allowing said user to specify said job priority, a rush job, and rip and print scheduling in advance; and

means for supporting specified non-proprietary black and white printers.